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ABSTRACT

A historical method of inquiry can be applied to an experimental teacher training program, specifically, the Ford Training and Preparation Program (FTPP). The historical method requires gathering a lot of loose ideas and events that have been part of the project and hanging them together in an integrated way. To achieve this, two organizing principles, the teleological approach and the systems approach, are utilized in constantly shifting focus to detail the development of the FTPP. In the teleological approach the program has an inherent purpose or end that can be found by studying an article by the founder of the FTPP on how to train school personnel. This article is called the program's "metatheory." The systems approach views the same article as having logical constructs, derived from systems theory, for approaching the training of teachers. In this approach, the article is called the program's "theory." These two approaches comprise the best way of explaining the components of an experimental program within a historical context. (JA)

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THE HISTORICAL METHOD OF INQUIRY IN A TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM: THEORY AND METATHEORY

by

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INTRODUCTION

From the very moment I received an invitation from Mrs. Schwartz, Director of the Ford Training and Placement Program, to be a part of this AERA session, I have had many reservations about my participation. One of my reservations centered around my initial fantasy that there was a thing called a "Historical Method for Evaluation of an Experimental Program," and I had to find out what it was in a few months' time.

While I had reservations about my being here today, I also saw the presentation of this paper as an opportunity to perhaps put together many loose ideas about the program accumulated over several years of working with it. In some ways, the last sentence is a concise way of talking about the historical method of research in an experimental program (or anywhere else for that matter). That is, the historical method used in the Ford Training and Placement Program, simply stated, involves gathering a lot of loose ideas and events that have been part of the project and hanging them together in an integrated way.

To do this, some kind of organizing principle is required -- as it is for any other discipline. I have chosen two organizing principles to aid me in my inquiry here. One of these organizing principles is rather traditional. I call it the "teleological approach" to the study of human organizations. I would now like to take time for a bit of expansion of each of these organizing principles before getting into the main body of this paper. I might only add that history has its own methodology, but organizing principles are often borrowed from other disciplines or created outright by historians.

ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES

From the inception of the Ford Training and Placement Program, one of the major issues has been that of specifically defining the goals, objectives, operating procedures, and evaluation techniques of the program. This lack of specificity in the goals and procedures of the program was a reflection of the historical context (mid-sixties) in which the program was developed. It was a response to the early demand for improved

teaching in inner-city schools.

The response of a scholar at the University of Chicago to that demand provided the conceptual framework upon which the program was created. J. W. Getzels is the "Founder" of the program and his conceptual framework is seen as a kind of "constitution" containing the purpose of the program.

One way of studying the Ford Training and Placement Program, then, is to look at how the staff of the program and the cadres have responded to or tried to use Mr. Getzels' conceptual framework as a basis for organizing their activities in terms of the model's purpose and goals. It is to this vantage point that I have assigned the label "teleological approach," after the notion that the program does have an ultimate purpose or ends that can be discovered through study of Mr. Getzels' article, "Education in the Inner-City: A Practical Proposal by an Impractical Theorist." [1]

Another way of studying the FTPP is to look at it as a social system, as Mr. Getzels and others have developed that notion. I will say more on that later.

There are some who contend that these two sets of organizing principles for studying human organizations are incompatible; or, at minimum, that one is better than another. [2] I am not so sure I can support either of these views, and in fact will try to show how they (the two organizing principles) complement one another in terms of an historical method for evaluating an experimental program.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MARTIN LUTHER KING CADRE: A TELEOLOGICAL VIEW

I have already suggested that the development of the Ford Training and Placement Program was in response to a need to train better teachers and other personnel for inner-city schools. What I have not said is that the problems of education in the inner-city are really exaggerated versions of educational problems you can find anywhere in the United States, and this is especially true of the problem of training teachers.

The scarcity of systematic and specific information about how to train teachers effectively is part of the historical context in which the program was developed. Analysis of the program's development of a

variety of training techniques must proceed from consideration of this particular factor. If there had been one or a dozen "right" ways to train teachers -tested and found effective - the program could have selected from the alternatives and applied the "right' way. But there was no right way - new ways had to be created.

Individuals like Silberman, Conant, and Koerner have helped to publicize this scarcity of systematic and specific information about how to train teachers effectively, but in reading their chronicles I somehow felt that their time, energy, and money might have been better used to try to actually develop a program like that represented by the Ford Program. [3]

At any rate, Mr. Getzels' proposal for training school personnel for the inner-city is not a theory of how to train school personnel. Rather, it is a commingling of theory and "metatheory." By metatheory, I mean a set of guiding assumptions that suggest an orientation for a program that trains school personnel. [4] As metatheory it has served its function well. As metatheory it has been a considerable step toward reality from the kind of "statement-of-the-problem" orientation represented by Conant, Koerner, and Silberman. As metatheory it is a constitution so to speak, for the Ford Training and Placement Program. And like most good constitutions, considerable flexibility for dealing with the hard realities of day-to-day operations is provided.

There is, however, a considerable leap from metatheory (or a set of guiding assumptions) to the hourly and daily exigencies of operating a program for five years. Consequently, in the Ford Program, considerable latitude was given to the director and staff of the program to develop an intermediate set of ideas to help make the transition from metatheory to reality.

Today, Mr. Getzels' proposal for training personnel for inner-city schools has come to mean something quite different from what it originally meant to the first director and staff of the program in 1967-68. And if you want to understand much of the development and style of operation of the staff, and cadres of the program, you have to be able to keep several things in mind.

For example, you have to be able to envision the first director and staff of the program as they went about the task of constructing a program theory -- a set of ideas to make the transition from meta-theory to day-to-day operations. Secondly, you have to be able to envision that at that point in the program's developmen in 1968, the going fad on the educational scene was laboratory training or sensitivity training, and the director and staff of the program thought that this was the key (that ever-sought-after panacea for the educational ills of our society) by which to train school personnel successfully. They used sensitivity training extensively in those early days of the program and it just did not work, at least not the way the staff of the program thought it should. As a participant in one of the first cadres of the program, I can personally testify to that.

Finally, you have got to be able to envision the later consequences of (1) this first attempt to build a program theory; and (2) the emphasis on sensitivity training as a way of operationalizing that program theory.

The process of building a program theory and operationalizing it went something like this. Initial interpretations of the constitution and the constructs of the model were made. Operating procedures were established to reflect these initial interpretations of the constitution and the constructs of the model. And a particular style of leadership consonant with that which is thought to exist in sensitivity training or T-groups is developed. By the end of 1968 we have norms established in the program for all three of the foregoing: 1) how to interpret the constitution; 2) operating procedures; and 3) a leadership style.

The program outline synopsis suggests that the Martin Luther King cadre would be used to illustrate the ideas presented in various papers in this session. So let's look at its development, historically.

The first King cadre started a three-year training cycle in the summer of 1969. Things like micro-teaching, curriculum development, cross-role training, sessions in the Learner and his Environment (educational psychology and sociology), and cadre development or T-group training went into the summer program. The materials describing the

summer program represented much concern and intensive staff planning to organize a set of co-ordinated experiences which would assist new teachers and experienced personnel in better coping with the problems to be faced in the urban schools. Certain documents reveal that the staff attempted to allow the cadres, including the first King cadre, the same degrees of freedom in structuring their program which the staff enjoyed. But this unaccustomed freedom created problems in the summer program. For example,

> A more puzzling problem for us (staff) was that of goals. The question was (from cadre members), 'What is the purpose of this program:' The answer we gave was, 'To help you improve your ability as a teacher and to help you improve your school.' The next question was 'How?' Our answer was, 'Well, that's up to you. You're the ones who know the situation and who have to decide what to do.' [5]

That statement came from the assistant director of the program early in 1970 describing a typical dialogue during the summer program. Let's see the consequences of that open-ended approach as they manifested themselves in the first King cadre. I quote:

> Obviously, the Ford staff had some expectations of the school cadre which were never clearly articulated. To avoid confusion and the wasting of precious time, the FTPP staff could make it clear in the summer exactly what it expects from the cadre and what its obligations to Ford and the university are. [6]

Every cadre that has gone through the program has typically been involved in somewhat the same kind of summer program described above, asked questions of the type mentioned above, and reached the same year-end conclusion mentioned above.

Now you might say that what has been said of the King cadre must be typical of a cadre's development; and it is. And you might say that, therefore, what you have just talked about doesn't tell us very much; and it doesn't -- in isolation from other facts out of historical context. But when you consider the flexibility of the "constitution" of the program, and when you consider the original "set" provided by the first director and staff, what I have just talked about tells you several things.

It tells you that the early leadership style of the program was "laissez-faire" (a term used by the first King cadre itself in describing the Ford staff). It tells you that the early norms of the program ran counter to some which operate in most schools, where professionals are told what to do and where to do it most of the time. It tells you that all cadres have generally looked for some externally given purpose and organizing principle for what they were involved in, and wanted the purposes and principles phrased in behavioral terms.

As will become evident through the next paper, the program had to try to alter its early laissez-faire leadership style; develop new norms for standard operating procedures; and begin the process of building an organizing principle or integrated scheme of things to help program participants get a sense of direction and wholeness for what they were doing.

Doing all of that is a long and difficult process; even longer than the actual duration of the program, unfortunately. Nevertheless, the program staff did go at it with much energy and acquired knowledge about training school personnel. In fact, in the same year that the first King cadre started, a new director came into the program to help direct the energy of the staff in some new ways.

There were some actual changes in the program in 1969-70, but the most significant changes were in the staff of the program and the kinds of expectations they held about what could in fact be changed in that whole process of trying to change traditional approaches to training school personnel. The assistant director of the program in a paper on "The Structure and Theme of the Summer Program" summarized an early approach. "We were asking far too much of these people. We had not looked adequately at the idea of growth: that growth is a slow thing; that growth must happen with those who will be in the situation." [7]

Those words, of course, applied to the staff of the program as well as the cadres. The paradox for both the staff and the second King cadre was one of trying to grow in situations previously defined by others. For the staff, a great deal of time was spent redefining or renegotiating or giving new structure to the first interpretation of the "constitution," leadership style, and operating procedures of the first director. As for the first King cadre, they would define for

the second King cadre the limits of inquiry into the whole educational process. Those limits were for the most part centered on curriculum innovations.[8]

During the first King cadre's placement year (1970-71) the group implemented and evaluated, with the assistance of the Ford Program, a number of fruitful curriculum projects. Early in 1971 the Ford Program approached a number of schools with the prospect of participating in an experiment - a variation on the cadre structure, function, and entry mechanisms. The notion was to create a cadre of all-experienced teachers to reduce entry problems, to test some ideas about retraining experienced teachers, to discover if pyramiding program resources would have greater impact and to establish a site for a demonstration school. The first King cadre submitted a document describing in detail their (and the school's) willingness to participate in such an experiment and really "selling" the new Martin Luther King, Jr. High School as the place for the experienced teacher cadre, and so forth. The Ford Program staff and executive board agreed with the cadre and the new King school was selected as the site for the experienced teacher cadre.

The second King cadre was formed in the Spring of 1971 and consisted of twenty-five persons initially, but expanded to forty-five during the year. There were no pre-service interns in the group; nine experienced teacher interns were at the school half day and at the University the rest of the time in degree programs. The group also included the principal, community representatives and other role specialists. All participated in a six-week summer training program in 1971 and began functioning in the new school in September. The second King cadre is integrated, and there was little official overlapping in membership between the two King cadres, but much daily process and task interaction between the two groups. Functionally, the first King cadre was absorbed by the second group during the year. The second King cadre has been one of the most productive in the history of the program, especially when measured in terms of school-wide project planning and completion. They have also been successful in other areas such as reduction of entry problems, and retraining of experienced teachers. They have had great impact on the school; the Ford Program and

the graduate school at the University.

A successful cadre! Yes. But all in all, most of what the second King cadre accomplished was pretty well determined by what had been established by and learned from the first King cadre.

To help make the transition to the next portion of this paper, I would like to make a few summary statements about the historical method of research in evaluating an experimental program. First, the historical method alone cannot be used to evaluate (as that term is usually used) an experimental program or any other kind of program. Second, the historical method can only put into perspective certain kinds of phenomena which may be further examined or evaluated by other techniques or tools from other disciplines. Third, to get this perspective on certain phenomena requires that you arrest time -- like the instant replays of football games with pretty much the same blurred results. Fourth, to continue that analogy, you need some way of capturing the changing patterns and processes so that when you play them back at a slower pace you can examine more carefully and in detail what might have been misinterpreted, overlooked, or not understood when they (the patterns and processes) actually occurred.

I choose two organizing principles to "fix" or "freeze" the processes and patterns occurring in the Ford Program. One of these organizing principles I have called a teleological approach to the study of human organizations, and I have tried to show how early attempts to formulate ways of approaching solutions to problems were later interpreted as ways of actually solving problems. For example, Mr. Getzels' article on training school personnel was an attempt to formulate ways of approaching solutions to problems. The first director and staff interpreted the article as a way of actually solving problems. I have also tried to show that these first interpretations of ways of approaching solutions to problems got imbedded in the program and provided the basis for the action of succeeding members in one of two ways: either as valid approaches to solving problems or as invalid approaches that had to be modified or completely changed, or eliminated from the program culture. The Ford staff tried to change things. The second King cadre worked with things as they were, to a great extent.

By using a teleological approach to study the program I, in effect, was focusing mostly on the ideals or ideological construct of the program and its effects on operations of the program. It was desirable, then, that I use a second and complementary approach to help explicate the realities or programmatical operational aspects of the program and of the two King cadres. That second approach is a system's approach, to which we now turn.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE KING CADRE: A SYSTEMS VIEW

What a systems approach to the study of organizations allows you to do is to disregard for a while the intentions of the founding fathers and the first interpreters of the constitution. It focuses not on the ideal or ideals of a group or organization, but on the realities of the group or organization. Separating the ideal from the real is difficult under most circumstances, but it is all the more difficult here since the systems theory used in the program back at Chicago also contains the ideals of the program. That's probably difficult to grasp as is, so let me try to expand it.

Since I have somewhat "misrepresented" Mr. Getzels in both his intentions and actual contribution to the Ford Program let me back step and do him better justice. In addition to unintentionally providing the program with a kind of constitution (or set of ideals) and consequently, a founding father's image, Mr. Getzels refined our thinking about systems by pointing out that schools are systems; that there are specific components or roles which make up this system; that these roles are complementary; that it is, therefore, foolish to train individuals for these roles in isolation from one another; that in order for systems to operate efficiently they must have inputs from other systems; and that different settings require (indeed, produce) different kinds of systems. Those are powerful concepts for understanding schools as systems. They can best be demonstrated by example.

In the beginning the program's staff only made a distinction between inner-city schools and other schools (say suburban) and tried to treat all cadres and all schools in a similar manner. The program

staff soon discovered, particularly in their experiences with the first King cadre, that each cadre was a unique group and each school was a unique social system. Therefore, applying the same treatment to all groups just did not work; responses were unpredictable. Further, the treatments and staff techniques used with the first King cadre were inappropriate in dealing with the all-experienced teacher second King cadre. It was soon obvious that not only is there a significant difference between schools in the inner-city. It became necessary to expand the systems concept of different settings at different times producing different systems to mean that not just widely divergent geographical areas produce different systems, but geographical areas just around the corner, so to speak, tend to produce different systems. The cadres which have gone through the program have all exhibited a common developmental pattern, but the King cadres were different from the Dyett Middle School cadre, and so on for all thirteen groups. Yet the schools which housed these different cadres are all inner-city schools, many within walking distance from each other.

Another of the systems concepts used in the program was the idea that systems, to operate efficiently, must have inputs from other systems. Normally, that would be taken to mean that it is the schools who ought to be open to inputs from the community and local colleges and universities. If you extend that to mean that the community and local colleges and universities should be open to inputs from the schools, you get a whole new game.

Let me collapse a few points about the systems concepts used. Schools are systems, composed of specific components or roles that are complementary and interdependent. The unexpected thing learned in working with the two King cadres (and other cadres) is that not all roles found in a school system complement one another.

Indeed, it was often difficult to understand how various teaching roles in the same school complemented and depended upon one another. This bit of reality, in many ways, violated our assumption about the interdependency and complementarity of roles in a system. Better put, this bit of reality did not match that ideal we had about how systems should operate. To quote Mr. Getzels directly:

> The conception of the school as a social system suggests that roles never function in isolation, but always in complementary relationships to other roles, that is, what teachers do is related to what counselors do, what counselors do to what psychologists do, what school psychologists do to what administrators do, and of course all of these to what the community is and does.[9]

Now, there is more reality in that quotation than I am going to allow for the sake of making a point; but there is also considerably less reality there than is needed to operate a program from the standpoint of systems theory. And, frankly, in his article Mr. Getzels told us that from the very beginning.

> For those who know me, I need hardly to add that my intent here is more to explore a way of working with practical problems in the context of theory than to argue the merits of any specific solutions I may propose. [10]

Nevertheless, by approaching the schools from the standpoint of systems theory, we were able to discover that in fact there is little relationship between what teachers, counselors, psychologists, and administrators do vis-a-vis one another -- especially in any conscious way. Even more, it can be said that adding components or roles (such as counselor or psychologist) to a system may be dysfunctional in terms of the operation of the system. As Glidewell has pointed out, such new roles tend to get encapsulated and restricted in a system much like a foreign element does when it enters the human body. [11]

During the life and analysis of the program we discovered a number of other things about schools and cadres through the use of systems theory in the program, but I will not try to go into them because the next two papers do that extremely well.

I would like to make a few summary statements about my use of a systems approach as part of a historical method of evaluating the program. First, it provided a way of looking at the formation, maintenance, and change in the relationships between various roles in a school. Second, it allowed a way of looking at some persistent problems of education in general and the training of school personnel in particular. For example, one of the major problems encountered in

training teachers for the classroom is that the role of teacher is ill-defined. And if you can't define what it is teachers should be doing, it is doubtful that you can seriously develop any way of helping them to do it. Third, as the program's staff learned more about systems theory, including its limitations for both viewing and dealing with the world, many problems of the schools and the program could be identified and analyzed in terms of systems theory.

Finally, systems theory provided a kind of theme for much of what was done in the program; which takes us full circle to the point I was making, with some difficulty, five minutes ago. Let me try again by making a few closing remarks.

CONCLUSION

From the standpoint of a teleological approach to evaluating the program (and I mean here something closer to understanding rather than assessment), Mr. Getzels' article provided a "metatheory" or set of ideals or a "constitution." From the standpoint of systems theory, the article provided useful concepts for looking at schools in a different and systematic way and accounting for the changing social context to which schools and cadres must respond through time.

If metatheory is seen as representing the ideal world and theory as representing the real world, it can be said that the tension generated between these two provided the basis for a lot of what was and is now being done in the program. By using a historical method in the program, certain tension points became readily discernible. Once you can locate tension points, you have the basis for setting goals, finding ways to reach them, evaluating both of these, and then repeating the cycle.

The historical method used here requires that you approach the program with a constantly shifting focus. This is sort of like the old "rabbit and duck" drawing where your shift in focus determines whether you see the rabbit or the duck.

I suppose what you choose to focus on depends upon your preference for either rabbit or duck. But if you are like me, you'll want them both served up for a variety and richness not possible with any single one.

That's what the historical method of research offers for evaluation of an experimental program, or any other on-going sequence of human activities -- richness and variety.

I hope that what I have served up has been palatable.

FOOTNOTES

1. J. W. Getzels, "Education in the Inner-City: A Practical Proposal by an Impractical Theorist," The School Review, Volume 75, No. 3, Autumn, 1967, pp. 285-299. The word teleological was chosen to describe this first approach because it suggests that the existence, function, or operation of a thing can be understood by reference to some ultimate end, first cause, or definite purpose that is inherent (natural) in the thing itself. In regard to the Ford Program, the program's inherent purpose was thought to be found in Getzels' proposal for training inner-city school personnel, and cadres and staff often went there in search of it.

2. D. Katz and R. L. Kahn, "Common Characteristics of Open Systems," in Systems Thinking, edited by F. E. Emery, Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Books, 1969, pp. 86-88.

3. See James A. Conant, Education of American Teachers (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963); James D. Koerner, The Miseducation of American Teachers, (Barton: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1963); Charles E. Silberman, Crisis in the Classroom (New York: Vintage Books, 1971).

4. Herbert A. Thelen, "Insights for Teaching from a Theory of Interactions," in The Nature of Teaching: Implications for the Education of Teachers (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: The Edward A. Wright Foundation, 1962), p. 19.

5. James F. McCampbell, "The Structure and Theme of the Summer Program" Post-Conference Report: Ford Training and Placement Program, edited by Sandra Tolbert (University of Chicago and Chicago Board of Education, August, 1970), p. 25.

6. R. C. Smith and S. Skurdy, "Observation of the Forrestville Cadre After a Year," FTPP, University of Chicago, 1970, p. 8 (duplicated).

7. J. F. McCampbell, "The Structure and Theme of the Summer Program," p. 26.

8. King Cadre Interim Report, February, 1972, (mimeographed).

9. Getzels, "Education in the Inner-City," p. 287.

10. Ibid., p. 285.

11. Personal conversation with Jack Glidewell, University of Chicago.